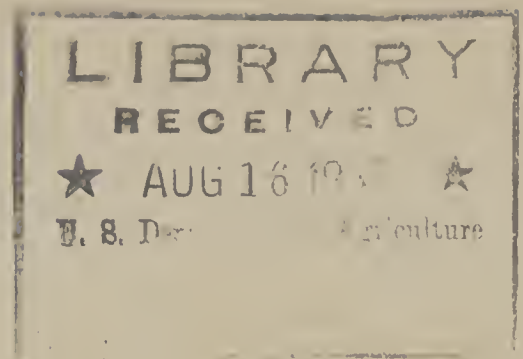


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THE GARDEN CALENDAR

A radio discussion by W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 50 associate NBC radio stations, Wednesday, July 31, 1935.

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Hello, folks. The announcements of county and State fairs and of numerous fall flower shows and exhibitions are beginning to appear and I presume that a lot of you folks have your eye on some of those blue ribbons and cash prizes that are being offered for the best and near-best in fruits, vegetables, flowers, canned goods, jellies, home-made bread and cakes and all the other good things that just make your mouth water to think about them.

I like to go to the fair on the first day when the exhibitors are bringing in their products and setting them up for display. I like to observe the painstaking care with which these exhibitors handle their exhibits and the pride that they take in displaying the best in the best possible way. Some of these folks have worked and watched all summer with the hope of having something that is just a little better than their neighbor's products and as a rule it is a good wholesome rivalry.

It is indeed surprising how a blue ribbon or two will stimulate our interest in our gardens and orchards and make us strive to improve our own record, in fact I have known of cases where the winning of one or two prizes at a flower show has made a real enthusiast out of just a very ordinary and unambitious gardener. And the surprising thing about it all is that the most amateur gardener will often step into the flower show and capture the most coveted prizes.

State and County fairs and the shows that are staged by garden clubs and other organizations are of great value from an educational standpoint and whether you win a blue ribbon or a prize it will pay you to exhibit if you have anything of real merit. I know of a case where a county fair had all run down at the heel, in fact it had become little more than a country horse-race where a few people went to bet on the horses. The superintendent saw that something must be done to draw the interest of the people at large and so he secured the cooperation of the womens' clubs of the county and offered substantial cash prizes for the best exhibits put on by these clubs. It took a couple of years for the idea to get across but when once started the people flocked to the fair to see the added attractions that were all county made and executed.

Improvement of schoolhouses and their surroundings, local libraries, child welfare, recreation centers, home beautification, forest preservation, home sanitation, improved kitchens, interior decorations and a lot more projects have been treated in these local county fair exhibits put on by the various womens' clubs.

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A neighbor of mine who has a small place recently won a few blue ribbons in local flower shows. This has set him thinking, set him going, and only a day or two ago I heard him remark, "I am going to organize a fall flower show in this neighborhood." More power to him and when he organizes his home neighborhood flower show I am going to be there with my saw and hammer to help him build the tables and stage the show. His flower show may not attract nation wide attention, not in the beginning at least, but I'll bet it will stimulate interest in our neighborhood and a lot more people will be growing flowers next year.

Any of you folks who are on exhibition committees or who are planning fruit, vegetable or flower shows for this fall may be interested in getting a copy of U. S. Department of Agriculture Miscellaneous Publication No. 85, entitled "Horticultural Exhibitions." This little publication tells how to arrange and to stage exhibitions effectively, outlines the classification of exhibits, and contains a scale of points for judging the leading fruits, vegetables and flowers. I will be glad to send copies so long as our supply lasts.

Good sportsmanship should rule and most anybody can smile when they are winning the prizes, but it takes a real sportsman to smile which he loses. I always did admire Sir Thomas Lipton for his true sportsmanship in the international cup races and how Sir Thomas would come right back with the determination to win that cup. The same spirit should prevail even in our county fairs and local garden club exhibitions and it is the spirit of cooperation that makes the show. A lot of you folks are already grooming your dahlias, roses, and chrysanthemums for the fall shows and many of you are no doubt selecting the choicest pears and apples to enter them in some contest, and I wish you the best of luck, but don't get sore if somebody beats you and above all don't find fault with the judges.

After the fairs and fall shows are over I hope a lot of you will write me and tell me how many blue ribbons you won.

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